BOOKS

Into the Storm: A Study in Command by Tom Clancy with General (Ret.) Frederick M. Franks, Jr., Putnam, N.Y., 1997. 532 pp. $27.50.

General George Marshall purportedly said there were three things he looked for in a soldier's baggage which would indicate a commitment to the profession: A field manual showed dedication to tactical competence; a piece of sporting equipment showed devotion to physical fitness; and a good reading lamp showed a desire to grow as a soldier and a person.

Field manuals are plentiful, and it's easy to keep fit in a health-conscious society, but browsing through a bookstore will usually present budget-constrained soldiers with their toughest choice. Should this visit's pick be a work of history or a biography? Should the selection be a piece of military theory or philosophy? How about a break with an intriguing read of an accomplished novelist?

In his newest book, *Into the Storm: A Study in Command,* Tom Clancy (with retired General Fred Franks) has tapped all these areas. The result is a fascinating blend of a first person account, a third person narrative, a compact analysis of military philosophy and warfighting theory, and an absorbing piece of history. And, like many of Clancy's works, it is sure to be a best seller because it is a damned exciting read.

Clancy's first volume in a new set of works — this will be one of a series which will eventually address the lives of several flag officers who commanded during Desert Storm — *Into the Storm* is a compelling account of the life of Army General Frederick M. Franks, Jr. More than a biography, it gives the reader background and relevance that some of the current 'as told to' works never approach. For as fascinating and dramatic as Franks' life is, his story — told by both Clancy and Franks — serves as a vehicle. His tragedy and triumph on and off the battlefield become a mirror reflecting the injury, the rehabilitation, and the eventual victory of the Army as an institution in the second half of the twentieth century. What's best? The book will prove thought-provoking for both civilians who have never worn a uniform and professional soldiers who have dedicated their life to serving the nation.

There are myriad high points in both the story and storytelling. The book begins at the VII Corps Command Post on the eve of the ground attack into Iraq, then flashes back through the years, experiences and preparations that made Franks a great commander. Interspersed are primers — not too complicated to confuse the civilian reader but filled with gems that had me reaching for my soldier's notebook on numerous occasions — about maneuver warfare theory and doctrine, the recent history of our Army and how it got to where it is, what it takes to prepare a large organization for combat, and some tips on leadership of people. The book ends with a chapter on Franks' final posting as the Architect of the Future Army: Commander of Training and Doctrine Command.

Appropriately, the focal point of the work is a detailed history of VII Corps' actions during Desert Storm told in the first person. This long-awaited recounting comes at the reader in intricate detail; it makes up 322 pages of the work. For those wanting to get beyond button-collector history and dive into battlefield discourse, you will find it in the chapters that relive the "Jayhawk's" finest moments. And, for those who have waited for General Franks' answers to the undeserved professional lambasting he received in the It-Doesn't-Take-a-Hero ambush, you won't be disappointed.

There are a few low points. Franks' experiences in Vietnam should have been told in the first rather than third person (he gives an indication in the acknowledgments that this was a subject of contention with the publishers), and it may be tough for the average Clancy reader to follow the battlefield actions of all the units that were part of VII Corps: maneuvering large mounted forces is, after all, sometimes tougher than brain surgery. But these are minor issues when considered in the context of the work as a whole.

In one of the chapters, Franks describes how he took five books along with him when he deployed to Saudi Arabia (you'll have to do some reading to find out which ones they were, but it is interesting that even when packing for war his actions proved true to General Marshall's admonishments). Knowing this, I predict most will read *Into the Storm* for pleasure, many will return to it as a reference work, but there will be some — in the future when our army again goes to war — who will take this work to the battlefield as a reminder of how great commanders accomplished the mission.

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Men, Ideas, and Tanks: British Military Thought and Armoured Forces, 1903-1939 by J.P. Harris, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995. 342 pages. $79.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.

Most armor officers know that Colonel Ernest Swinton, author of *The Defence of Duffer's Drift,* invented the tank in the early days of the First World War, but reactionary British generals, especially Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, prevented full use of the tank to break the stalemate of the trenches on the Western Front. When tanks were finally used *en masse* at the battle of Cambrai on 20 November 1917, Haig's shortsightedness in failing to leave a tank reserve as an exploitation force prevented tanks from achieving a decisive victory. During the interwar years, J.F.C. Fuller and B.H. Liddell Hart were voices in the wilderness of British defense planning, promulgating the idea of blitzkrieg, which was ignored by their own High Command but adopted by Guderian and the Wehrmacht to decisive effect in the Second World War. Most armor officers know these facts. In *Men, Ideas, and Tanks,* Sandhurst lecturer J.P. Harris disproves all of them.

Harris traces the idea and the reality of tank warfare from its beginnings in an H.G. Wells science fiction story published in 1903 ("The Land Ironclads") to the tragic position in which the British Army found itself in 1939. The nation which had invented the tank, first employed it in battle, and led the world in tank development until the early 1930s, found itself on the verge of armored warfare with inadequate armor doctrine and inferior tanks — and nothing better on the drawingboard.

Men, Ideas, and Tanks convincingly demonstrates how fragile is the process of innovation in a military organization, how important the support of senior officers is in making innovation become an accepted part of the institution, and how serious the effects of neglecting innovation can be. At a time when the U.S. Army is itself in the midst of a revolution in military affairs, and defense expenditures will be at best stagnant for the foreseeable future, these lessons are immediately relevant to our own Army. History may not repeat itself, but it often rhymes, and in the wake of the Cold War, the international system and America's security situation may more closely resemble Britain of the 1930s than we might think.

By the way, while no one person should be credited with the invention of the tank, Winston Churchill's role was the most central in this as in so many other areas. Haig devoted more resources to the tank than its early performance demonstrated it deserved. Mechanical shortcomings in the tanks of the day prevented exploitation at Cambrai, which was, in any case, as much a victory of improved artillery tactics as it was of massed armor. J.F.C. Fuller and B.H. Liddell Hart vastly exaggerated their own role in the development of armored doctrine in the inter-war years, being wrong on many central points, including the necessity of combined arms formations. The weaknesses of British armored forces in 1939 were primarily due to the British government's failure to accept that the Army should play a role in France against Hitler until it was almost too late. And many of the failures of British armor against Rommel were a result of poor training and doc-

trine developed by the Royal Tank Corps in the inter-war years. Armor — and armored — officers should read this book.

CPT JOHN NAGL
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SAS Survival Guide by John Wiseman, Harper Collins Publishers, Glasgow. 1993. $7.50.

If you're looking for a compact, easy to understand survival guide, then John Wiseman's *SAS Survival Guide* is a great one. The author has instructed at the SAS survival school for 26 years, and his book cuts through the BS and gets right to the important stuff. It's organized and illustrated extremely well, with major sections on shelter, camp craft, food, medical, and rescue. Color photos of edible plants, diagrams of shelters and traps, and illustrated first aid steps add to the book's substantial text. Best of all, it fits in an ammo pouch. If you need a survival guide, the *SAS Survival Guide* is about as good a value as they come.

By the way, I took the book to Africa, where I checked out the section on eating termites — (a topic with which I now have first-hand experience!). Mr. Wiseman likes to boil or roast his termites (as most proper English do), while many varieties are quite tasty raw.

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With Churchills to War — 48th Battalion Royal Tank Regiment at War: 1939-45 by Peter Gudgin, Sutton Publishing Limited, Phoenix Mill, England. 193 pages. $18.99.

From duty as an officer with the battalion, Peter Gudgin has relied on memory and personal memorabilia to depict training and combat by one of London's two territorial tank battalions. From exercises on the Salisbury Plain and in the hills of Scotland, the 48th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment (48RTR) soldiers and their Churchill tanks emerged well-prepared for fighting in Africa and in Italy.

The 48RTR first entered combat on April 21, 1943, working with infantry to take Longstop Hill, ending five months of military stalemate and opening the way for the Allied victory in northeast Africa. In the process, soldiers of the 48RTR were first to capture intact the German "Tiger" tank, with its deadly 88mm main gun. Almost one year later, with greatly improved infantry-armor coordination, the 48RTR helped break through the "Gothic" Line in northern Italy and then crossed over the Senio River in Christmas week, 1944. Several 48RTR Churchills literally supported a two-girder bridge for tracked and wheeled vehicles at the Senio. By the war's end in Europe, the 48RTR was within sight of Venice.

Admirers of the Sherman tank may find Gudgin overly effusive about the virtues of the Churchill. However, with its hill-climbing ability and a large crew compartment affording easy exit if hit, the Churchill proved readily adaptable to the challenges confronting the 48RTR. Gudgin admits that the Churchill proved no match for the new German "Tiger" tanks.

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